

REFLECTIONS

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.

The King, in a letter addressed to the Duke of Somerset, Chairman of the British Olympic Council, has graciously expressed his interest in the preparations for the Olympic Games at Berlin in 1916, and his hope that every effort will be made to ensure that the United Kingdom is represented by its best athletes on that occasion. The Duke of Westminster has opened a special fund, and will be glad to receive and acknowledge personally any donations, large or small, that may be sent to him at Grosvenor House, W. One of the objects of the fund is "To raise the standard of physical efficiency of the youth of the nation."

The annual report of the Metropolitan Asylums Board gives some interesting details of the work done by the Board. The work of the ambulance service is summarised thus:—

Land Service.—Infectious patients removed from home to hospital, 23,197; other infectious removals, 22,327. Conveyance of non-infectious cases, 11,440; total removals, 56,964. Mileage run by vehicles, 419,207.

River Service.—Patients conveyed down the river to the Board's hospitals, 5; other passengers conveyed to and from the hospitals, including staff, contractors' workmen, and recovered patients 296; total passengers, 301. Miles run by steamboats, 3,405.

The Ambulance Committee report:—

"The year 1912 will be notable in the history of the ambulance service as the year during which the substitution of motor for horse traction throughout the service was completed. September 14th was the last date on which horses were employed.

"As the change proceeded we had to face the difficulty of obtaining competent motor drivers, who could also be relied upon to undertake the careful removal of patients to and from the ambulances by stretcher, carrying-chair, or in arms. We, therefore, considered it expedient to cause such of our older coachmen as exhibited aptitude for motor work to go through a course of training in motor driving at the Western Station. All these men were already trained in the handling of patients. They, with few exceptions, gave satisfactory proof of capacity as motor drivers. We thus avoided the unpleasant duty of dismissing old servants of the board."

Dr. H. W. Bruce, medical superintendent at the Southwark Infirmary, reported to the Board of Guardians last week that there had been eighteen cases of infective enteritis among young children patients in the institution, and that four had died. He attributed the outbreak entirely to the poisoning of the children by the refuse on the railway siding, which was being removed by the Camberwell Borough Council. The Guardians appointed a deputation to wait on the Local Government Board.

Several excellent reasons are advanced by Mr. Arthur J. Atwell, in a letter to the press, for the establishment of a farm in connection with King Edward VII.'s Hospital, Cardiff: (a) Because it costs the institution nearly £2,000 a year for farm produce, including milk, poultry, eggs, butter, vegetables and fruit; (b) because by owning its own farm all obtainable produce would be fresh, and delivered direct; (c) because a good-sized farm-house would serve for a good number of convalescent patients as a "rest," and beds otherwise occupied by them could be used by many of the patients waiting admission.

SOCIAL SERVICE.

A DUTY TO HUMANITY.

May I pass on for what it is worth an idea that came to me this morning? I am deeply interested in phthisical work, and am always trying to solve the problem of the stamping out of phthisis in our nation.

The more I see of the disease the more I realise that no number of free Sanatoria can stamp it out. What has impressed me very much is the almost uselessness of all the precautions we take in these institutions and which we teach the patients to take in relation to themselves and others, which are entirely outweighed by the mischief that is wrought (unthinkingly, I know) when these people either leave our care or even go out for a few hours.

They seem to forget that it is nothing short of criminal that they should spit about our parks and streets, that they *will* kiss the little children, and let the little ones drink out of the same cup as they use, use the same handkerchief, sleep in the same bed, and inhale their breath. Having nursed a fair number of these patients, I cannot help feeling that phthisis is not only a disease, *but a curse*. If these people who are suffering from this disease could see the last few weeks and days of suffering endured by their fellow-creatures and enter into all the cruelty of the disease, I do feel that they would be more careful. The question is, How can the national conscience be aroused? How can we make *every individual feel his (or her) DUTY* towards the whole race?

Some good, I know, is being done in our Sanatoria, but I feel that the disease is *not* going to be stamped out by the influence of the patients received there.

We have got to bring out the honour of each man and woman. The feeling in these institutions at present is not one of love for human beings. At present the patient feels he can demand almost anything, because the public ought to be grateful that he has shut himself away from the world and so, at least, is not causing infection outside. He feels he is not receiving benefit, but is bestowing benefit on others, and it is this sort of man who, when a little thing annoys him,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)